

BALLET

Today

ONE SHILLING



AUGUST, 1955

ALICIA MARKOVA

FULL BALLET GUIDE FOR THE MONTH

SADLER'S WELLS BALLET

at Covent Garden

Tues.	Aug. 23rd	<i>Sylvia (Fonteyn, Somes)</i>
Wed.	„ 24	<i>Shadow</i> <i>Checkmate</i> <i>Tricorne</i>
Thurs.	„ 25	<i>Shadow</i> <i>Sylphides</i> <i>Angot</i>
Fri.	„ 26th	<i>Angot</i> <i>Sylphides</i> <i>Tricorne</i>
Sat.	„ 27th (Mat)	<i>Sylvia (Beriosova, Field)</i>
	„ 27th (Eve)	<i>Sylvia (Grey, Chatfield)</i>
Mon.	„ 29th	<i>Checkmate</i> <i>Sylphides</i> <i>Tricorne</i>
Tues.	„ 30th	<i>Giselle (Elvin, Field)</i> <i>Tricorne</i>
Wed.	„ 31st	<i>Angot</i> <i>Symphonic</i> <i>Checkmate</i>
Thurs. Sept.	1st	<i>Angot</i> <i>Symphonic</i> <i>Checkmate</i>
Fri.	„ 2nd	<i>Sylvia (Nerina, Rassine)</i>
Sat.	„ 3rd (Mat)	<i>Giselle (Elvin, Field)</i> <i>Shadow</i>
Sat.	„ 3rd (Eve)	<i>Giselle (Fonteyn, Somes)</i> <i>Shadow</i>

FESTIVAL BALLET

at Festival Hall

Mon.	Aug. 1st to	<i>Swan Lake (Act II)</i>
Wed.	„ 3rd	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> <i>Napoli</i>
Thur.	„ 4th to	<i>Swan Lake (Act II)</i>
Sat.	„ 6th	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> <i>Symphony for Fun</i>
Mon.	„ 8th to	<i>Petrouchka</i>
Wed.	„ 10th	<i>Etudes (Première)</i> <i>Prince Igor</i>
Thur.	„ 11th to	<i>Scheherazade</i>
Sat.	„ 13th	<i>Etudes</i> <i>Symphony for Fun</i>
Mon.	„ 15th to	<i>The Nutcracker (full version)</i>
Wed.	„ 17th	<i>Le Beau Danube</i>
Thur.	„ 18th to	<i>Etudes</i>
Sat.	„ 20th	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> <i>Napoli</i>
Mon.	„ 22nd to	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
Wed.	„ 24th	<i>Concerto (Grieg)</i> <i>Napoli</i>
Thur.	„ 25th to	<i>Esmeralda (Act II)</i>
Sat.	„ 27th	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> <i>Le Beau Danube</i>
Mon.	„ 29th to	<i>Giselle</i>
Wed.	„ 31st	<i>Spectre de la Rose</i> <i>Prince Igor</i>

ROYAL DANISH BALLET AT EMPIRE THEATRE, EDINBURGH

Eve.	Aug. 23rd	<i>La Sylphide</i> <i>Capricious Lucinda</i>
Mat.& Eve.	„ 24th	<i>La Sylphide</i> <i>Capricious Lucinda</i>
Eve.	„ 25th	<i>La Sylphide</i> <i>Capricious Lucinda</i>
Eve.	„ 26th	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
Mat.& Eve.	„ 27th	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
Eve.	„ 29th	<i>Romeo & Juliet</i>
Eve.	„ 30th	<i>Napoli</i> <i>Graduation Ball</i>
Mat.& Eve.	„ 31st	<i>Napoli</i> <i>Graduation Ball</i>
Eve. Sept.	1st	<i>Napoli</i> <i>Graduation Ball</i>
Mat.& Eve.	„ 2nd	<i>The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master</i> <i>La Sylphide</i> <i>Napoli (Act III)</i>
Mat.& Eve.	„ 3rd	<i>The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master</i> <i>La Sylphide</i> <i>Napoli (Act III)</i>

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at Princes Theatre, Edinburgh

From Aug. 22nd-Sept. 10th—Matinees only.

TELEVISION

Aug. 22nd *Royal Danish Ballet.*

Selections.

Ballet Today

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Editor—Estelle Herf

August 1955

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Ballet Diary	2
London Ballet Month, A. V. Coton ..	4
France	6
South Africa-Holland-Ger- many	7
Round the Garden ..	8
Musician at the Ballet ..	10
Vaktang Chabukiani ..	11
Alicia Markova Story ..	12
News in Pictures ..	14
Backstage	15
Young Dancer	16
Round the Studios ..	18
Sharing the Laurels..	20
Dramatic Art through Ballet Training	21
Discs	22
Dear Editor	23

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Cover Portrait
ALICIA MARKOVA

opposite
BERYL GREY
both exclusive *Ballet Today*
photographs by Mike Davis.



LONDON

A. V. COTON

COVENT GARDEN

THE Covent Garden season which ended in June has been notable for the number of roles performed by second, third, and even fourth casts. Ballerinas, contrary to a popular belief, are not as common as blackberries in September, and a company which performs an average of nearly 200 times a year must give top-rank roles to dancers of less than top ranking; a practice which demonstrates that performances are put on not to show off the dancers—whatever their quality—but to show ballets.

We have by now experienced platoons of Sylvias, regiments of Auroras, battalions of Coppelias; towards the end of the season *Le Tricorne* revealed the paces of two new "Millers" and a fresh "Miller's Wife". Both Pirmin Trecu and David Blair approach the role with seriousness and sensitivity; they dance with different degrees of flexibility; neither of them is a strong enough actor to give a clear characterisation, yet these attempts were very well worth seeing, for each was brimful of promise and another ten or perhaps twenty tries might suddenly show either of these young men with a complete grasp of the strengths, subtleties and sensuousness needed to make the characterisation.

With each of these Valerie

Taylor danced as the Wife, and obviously found each partner exactly right for certain moments of the ballet, though it was equally obvious that she had to rely on herself entirely to get the effect of some passages. She has many advantages in the role; her looks, style of hair, and carriage of the upper body combine to produce a very Spanish appearance: her arms are nicely shaped and finely controlled and she is one of the few non-Spanish dancers to possess that cat-like flexibility of the arms and torso so necessary to the dancing of this role.

Almost at the end of the season, Anton Dolin came in as guest artist in *Job*, dancing his old role of Satan. The novel choreographic style of the work makes it look, to the uninformed eye, easy to perform; it, in fact, requires a kind of suppleness for which the ballet-dancer is not trained and a fully danced performance which is truly moving means a special extra effort from the whole cast—an effort not always forthcoming. Dolin's early gymnastic style made his performances always memorable, but nowadays he does not achieve the same effect. His appearances this season did not in any way impair the impressions of the role created since he left the Company, by such interpreters as Harold Turner and John Hart.

of the Romantic Era—cleverly mirrored the dance style and mannerisms of the 1840's. The dances, both solo and ensemble, used, in the main, simple steps and arm movements which were beautifully and delicately rendered by Beryl Goldwyn, Noreen Sopwith and Patricia Dyer, who represented respectively Taglioni, Grahm and Cerrito. Norman Dixon gave clean and effective support to his partners in turn, but seemed slightly overcome by the modest difficulties of the dancing in his own solo passages.

Madame Rambert's production of *Giselle* has a completeness, a full realisation of the style required, which make it unique; more than any other contemporary version seen in London, it has very high dramatic power

when danced all-out by its cast. Like any genuinely careful production of *Hamlet*, it shows that the greatest roles in theatrical classics can be meaningful when interpreted with clarity and sincerity, even by comparatively juvenile artists. Beryl Goldwyn's *Giselle* is a fully realised person inside a framework in which all the other characters are also clear-cut and dramatically convincing. But of the three new works it was Kenneth Macmillan's *Laidrette* which showed most original choreographic pattern; in theme it inevitably suffered by its inescapable comparison with Cranko's recent *The Lady and The Fool*, an almost identical story with an almost identical visual setting and characters. *Laidrette* is a sad child, abandoned by her

BALLET RAMBERT

The Ballet Rambert's two week season at Sadler's Wells opened on June 28th with a repertoire containing some fine examples of old and recent ballets, which were reinforced by three new works. Robert Joffrey's *Persephone* can be described as a well-meant effort to tell again the ancient myth of the Earth Goddess, her daughter Persephone, and Pluto. But more than half the point of using a well-known story as framework for a ballet is to create choreography which throws a new light on the characters, or their motives, or which stresses some eternal value in the story so that it comes to us with freshness and quality of surprise. Mr. Joffrey, badly let down by the sumptuous music of

Vivaldi (which didn't atmospherically fit his story's movement or moods), and by the sad decor of Harri Wich, had put together some routine, and some very pretty passages of academic dancing, to which he added, in the Underworld scene, some dreary acrobatic figures exactly similar to those seen in a dozen other ballets over the past ten years. No attempt was made to accent the story so that it gained a new significance and its one powerful impression was of the delicate precision and the tenderness of characterisation shown by Noreen Sopwith in the title role.

His second effort, *Pas des Deesses*, was nearly a total success, for this neat historical pastiche—of three great ballerinas



BALLET MONTH

FESTIVAL BALLET

people (a group of wandering pierrots), who gets involved in a ball at a rich man's house; the rich man is attracted to, and dances with, her; in response she is swept away by his attentions. At the end of the ball, all unmask and Laiderette is revealed in all her pathetic plainness—with consequences that are obvious. Macmillan's choreography is at times fussy and at times quite banal, but its general pattern is full of original touches and he shows again (as he did in two earlier ballets this year) that his invention can keep pace with his imagination—and this is a very powerful qualification in a young choreographer.

The role of the heroine was danced with nice understanding by Patricia Ashworth, who moves

with delicate speed and mimes with a very attractive simplicity. The music, vastly impressive in its own right, is Martin's *Petite Symphonie Concertante*; for harp, piano, harpsichord and double string orchestra, and far from overwhelming the pathetic little drama, it gave the right supporting aural framework to Macmillan's dance designs.

Altogether the season showed that this company still has the widest range of the best invented choreography by English artists, some of it dating from nearly twenty years ago and yet remaining theatrically fresh and exciting. But the company as a whole lacks the combination of discipline and experience necessary to do justice to such ballets as, *Lilac Garden*, *Les Sylphides* and *Gala Performance*.

The by now customary summer season of the Festival Ballet opened at the Royal Festival Hall on July 11th; a programme of four items stressed again the unwisdom of following the French fashion of giving too many ballets at once. Intervals of twenty-five minutes, far from gearing up the audience's appetites serve to irritate them unless the dancing is of quite exceptional quality. Even allowing for "first night excitement", and for the company getting used to this temporary stage, the level of performance was much lower than one anticipated. Although she obviously *knows* and *feels* the choreography of *Swan Lake*, Natalie Krassovska is unable to bring either brilliance to the dancing or conviction to the characterisation of Odette. Two nights later, one of the most

convincing interpretations of the role seen in London for years was provided by Alexandra Danilova, guest star whom Londoners first greeted nearly thirty years ago in the Diaghilev Ballet. It's simply no use trying to analyse what Mme. Danilova does with the choreography; dozens of other dancers—some of them about half her age—know it equally well, but she invests the occasion with a blend of controlled charm, firm dance discipline, innate sense of what the character is supposed to mean (and what the character certainly meant to Ivanov, who created the original choreography). The result is a performance full of splendid dance movements revealing a marvellous body held under perfect discipline; and a projection of Odette which makes completely believable to us the centuries-old legend about a princess being bewitched and changed into a magical bird . . . or, reducing the affair to its simplest terms—her interpretation is a showing of what can be done with the role by a dancer who happened to come through the Russian training system in both its Imperial and its Revolutionary phases, and who afterwards joined Diaghilev when he had the services of the four only important living choreographers, in turn. Danilova's Odette, like, for instance, Peggy Ashcroft's Hedda Gabler, is a totally fresh realisation of the possibilities of the role, such as can be created only by a performer who takes the trouble to maintain her technical skill at its highest power, and who supports that technique with all the sympathy and sensitivity that a hard-working life has taught her.

Patricia Ashworth

in

Laidrette

Gillian Martlew

Noreen Sopwith

Alexander Bennett

in

Persephone



New ballets and many revivals will be seen during the remainder of Festival Ballet's season; these will be discussed in future issues.

FRANCE

ENGHIEN-LES-BAINS is an elegant watering place near Paris. Its gaming tables draw crowds, and the Casino also possesses a very pretty theatre where, every year, choreographic and lyric performances of a very high quality are presented.

This year, on 2nd June, the Ballet season of Enghien-les-Bains opened with a very fine evening's programme.

Balance à Trois is a ballet with story and choreography by Jean Babilée—music by Jean-Michel Damase, scenes and costumes by Tom Keog, performed by Babilée, Violette Verdy and Alexandre Kalioujny. It has proved a complete success for the author and his interpreters. J. M. Damase is a composer whose music, while being admirable for the dance, also has a real value of its own.

When the curtain rises, Violette Verdy dances a long, strenuous and difficult solo with every appearance of ease and lightness; in this solo, the girl thinks of her work, recalls her lesson, strays from it and amuses herself. The whole of this part has great freshness and incomparable grace, and Violette Verdy dances it admirably. Jean Babilée enters, and begins to show the girl something of athletics; at first, she is no more than curious, but then she yields to surprise and takes part in the boy's acrobatic exploits. A second athlete, Kalioujny, comes in; now the spirit of competition is felt and we see the two boys in a contest of gymnastic prowess before the girl. It ends in reconciliation—but one cannot tell the story of such a ballet; one must see it, and fall victim to its charm.

Violette Verdy displays the whole gamut of her virtuosity—sharp, precise, crisp—but she never gives the impression of repeating a well-learned lesson, she has the gift of binding together all the parts of the choreography as she interprets it, smoothly, with enchanting juvenile grace.

Alexandre Kalioujny is in great form; good-looking and athletic but every inch a dancer, he made a perfect third in *Balance à Trois*, and the public gave a great welcome to the former star dancer of the Opera.

Jean Babilée uses choreographic language like an artist who knows the academic style thoroughly but knows how to freshen it with new combinations—the exact opposite of stiff classicism. There are times when Jean Babilée makes a show of nonchalance which is—or he thinks it is—one of his charms; but on this occasion he has become engrossed in his subject and has done what he

wished to do, how he wished to do it.

Thus was born *Balance à Trois* with its very pure modern style, in which movement is expressed in pictures, attitudes and combinations in the most unconventional way. It is very well written and well composed, and was given a triumphant reception.

During the evening, we saw Irene Skorik in a charming short ballet entitled *The Dryad*—a story by Irene Lidova, with Adolphe Adam's music. A Dryad falls in love with a Prince, but human love is forbidden to these daughters of the woods. The vengeance of the Gods is not slow to manifest itself and the Dryad dies in the arms of the Prince, who is brought to life by Milorad Miskovitch, whose personality stamps itself on each one of his roles. The style and line of Irene Skorik have no need of praise.

M. Manuel Parés, of the Opéra, presented a ballet

L'Abbayeur in which one sees the porter of a Cabaret suddenly endowed with a fortune, who amuses himself, loses his money and returns to his job as a porter. There is not much dancing in the choreography. Serge Perrault and the young Chernova interpreted this ballet.

Finally, in this evening at Enghien, Colette Marchand said goodbye to the ballet, for she is definitely going into music hall revue. She and Serge Perrault have been engaged by M. Walter Chiari for an Italian Revue. She and Milorad Miskovitch danced the well known pas de deux *Le Combat* choreography by William Dollar, music by Banfield.

There is very little to be said about *Antar* Choreographer Victor Gvosky with Rimsky-Korsakov's music, interpreted by Claire Sombier and Alexandre Kalioujny. In these days we can't go on repeating *Sheherazade*, that sort of Ballet has had its day.

Violette Verdy



EVERYONE interested in the Marquis de Cuevas' Ballet Company was relieved to hear about the return of John Taras—even if, like me, they disliked the choreographic inventions of this Master of Ballet.

Born in U.S.A. John Taras wanted to be an actor; in fact, he became one—a child-actor in a semi-professional troupe. As the theatre needed someone to direct the dances, Taras began his career as a choreographer before he became a dancer. Then he studied with Fokine—which, more than anything else, developed his passion for choreographic art; afterwards,—and having entirely abandoned Comedy—he worked for a while with Elisabeth Anderson, before joining Balanchine's Company during the World Exhibition in the U.S.A. in 1940. Later he was with the Philadelphia Ballet (where he met Rosella Hightower) and at the Ballet Theatre where he designed his first ballet—*Graziana* to Mozart's music, for Alicia Alonso, Nora Kaye and Andre Eglevsky. Then he created *La Dame aux Camélias* (danced by Markova and Dolin) for Colonel de Basil's Company.

There followed a trip to England and France, during which he contracted meningitis. Resolved to return to the U.S.A., he agreed to create—in 10 days—a ballet which the Metropolitan Ballet wanted for Svetlana Beriosova. Thus was born the young choreographer's masterpiece *Design for Strings*.

Then he did *Persephone* for the San Francisco Opera Ballet (with Wollhar) created *The Minotaur* in place of Balanchine—and, on that occasion, discovered Tanquiel le Clerq, to whom he gave her first big role. He returned to Europe with the Metropolitan Ballet and finally received a telegram from the Marquis de Cuevas asking him to join his Company in England.

John Taras' work for the Company has been very considerable. He brought precision to the ensembles, and assurance to the soloists. One cannot deny his gift for directing a rehearsal—but one must also say that his zeal for perfection sometimes drives him to tire his artists beyond all limits; when the result on the stage is not what he had a right to expect. Now, one must admit, John Taras seems to have learned wisdom, and his demands are calmer and more reasoned. In short order, he has rescued the troupe from the chaos into which it had fallen; he has eliminated—and will, no doubt, continue to eliminate—certain incapable members who had somehow slid

Continued on page 20

HOLLAND

THE Ballet der Lage Landen, based in Amsterdam, consists of 27 Dutch dancers under the artistic direction of Mascha ter Weeme, with two English leading dancers—Angela Bayley and Norman McDowell. Jack Carter is resident choreographer, Norman McDowell designs the costumes and decor (their work for Ballet Rambert and Ballet Workshop will be remembered by English ballet-goers).

During this season they have put on with great success both *Impromptu for Twelve* and *Stagioni*, first seen in London, and new works *Pavane Interrompue* with music by Granados and *Paysage Triste* with music by Faure; together with Acts 1 and 2 of *Coppelia*—the first classic to be produced by a Dutch company—which has been well received all over the country. They tour in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, and will be in France later in the year.



A group from Stagioni now in the repertoire of the Ballet der Lage Landen. The group shows Angela Bayley (kneeling centre). Decor and costumes by Norman McDowell (standing). Choreographer Jack Carter.

GERMANY

YVONNE Georgi's second ballet performance in Hannover during this season contained one first-night and two first performances. The stylish co-ordination of music, dance and decor succeeded almost perfectly in *Les Biches* by Francis Poulenc with the same plot as the Bronislava Nijinska's version, created in 1923 in collaboration with the composer. The ironic exaggeration of the sophisticated and capricious style of decor and costumes found the exact realisation in the choreography. The week-end flirt in the salon of a distinguished cigarette smoking Parisien was full of charm and wit. Here Sigrune Hirsch showed considerable solo ability.

The second ballet, *Dance Variations* by the American Morton Gould, known only in concert form, is now choreographed by Y. Georgi to a modern setting. The score is a mixture of classical reminiscences and jazz rhythms composed for two pianos and orchestra. The colourful costumes and abstract decor by Rudolph Schulz made a suitable frame and background for the choreography. Two dice players symbolising the play of *Fate*, are surrounded by jostling people until the appearance of their opponent *Past*. Now the players try in a wild whirl to resist the *Past* and their giddiness and ecstasy temporarily deliver the people from its influence. Finally however all must succumb to its power.

The third ballet, Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagete* was danced

against bright blue curtains with wonderful perspectives which gave the stage a classical symmetry for this work. The score found ideal realisation in the libretto. Ralph Briegk and Irmgard Rother danced the Apollo and Terpsichore pas de deux with purity and style. The musical direction was by Johannes Schüler.

Eva Bülow

AUSTRALIA

WALTER Gore and Paula Hinton, went to Australia to form a company for the Australian Ballet Society. But, while their company was a great artistic success, public support was lacking, and suitable theatres in the capital cities could not be found. After a short tour, their company disbanded.

Yurek Shabelevsky, remembered here from the Ballet Russe days, has now joined the successful Borovansky Ballet. He has been commissioned to revive Massine's, *Les Presages*, and may dance with the company himself later. There will be, however, some differences from the original. The Masson decor, which everyone regarded as being quite impossible, will be replaced by separate backcloths, designed by the Australian artist, William Constable.

Three of the company's principals, Raoul Celada, Christiane Hubert and Paul Hammond, have left the company. But

two dancers who were with Alicia Alonso's company have flown from America to join the Borovansky Ballet, Royes Fernandez and Charles Dickson. The company is led by Peggy Sager, Vassili Trunoff, Kathleen Gorham (late of de Cuevas), Jocelyn Vollmar (de Cuevas and New York City ballet), Paul Grinwis and Kiril Vassilkovsky (both ex-Ballet Russe).

Algeranoff and his wife, Claudie Algeranova, supported by Ronald Reay, have been extremely successful in their presentations of scenes from the classical ballets for the Australian Children's Theatre.

John O'Brien

SOUTH AFRICA

NADIA Nerina and Alexis Rassine, due to return to London in the middle of this month, will have completed a four month's tour of South Africa.

They have travelled twenty-six thousand miles by air and performed in 12 cities. Typical of their reception throughout the tour—at Port Elizabeth over a thousand balletomanes were at the Airport on a Sunday afternoon to see them off, on arrival at the next town they were greeted with baskets of flowers. Houses were packed to capacity. It is particularly interesting that ordinary entertainment in South Africa averages 4/- a seat, whereas they

were able to pack houses to capacity without exception throughout the tour on an average of 21/- a seat. In Windhoek, South-West Africa, the charges were 27/6d. and 37/6d. a seat.

This has surely proved the intense public interest in ballet in southern Africa.

South Africans in the past few years have seen two other famous dancers—Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, but they have had visits from, Danny Kaye, Maurice Chevalier, Vienna Boys Choir, Sadler's Wells Ballet, Old Vic Company with Billy Rogers, Irene Worth, Douglas Campbell, Terry Thomas, Tommy Trinder, Stanley Holloway Gigli, Infantino, Mischa Elman, The Folies, Bergere, George and Alfred Black Revues and Tom Arnold Pantomimes.

A new photograph of Nadia Nerina and Alexis Rassine appears on page 8.

Coming Next Month

David Benn gives an
on-the-spot report of
Festival Ballet
in Madrid



THE season just closed at Covent Garden has been an eventful one for both dancers and audience. Three new Ashton ballets have had their first performance and Anton Dolin has made his final appearance as Satan in *Job*. Deputations bearing gifts from the gallery marked the marriage of the incomparable Fonteyn, while at her first appearance after the birth of her son Sven, Beryl Grey was bombarded with flowers from enthusiasts in the upper parts of the house.

Yet it is significant that a feeling of intense activity has been sustained even in the absence of two of the ballerinas and their partners. Elvin and Field have been in South America while Nerina partnered by Alexis Rassine, has been touring her native South Africa.

Svetlana Beriosova has proved her ballerina quality in *Swan Lake* and underlined it with her performances in new *Rinaldo and Armida*. Dancing is in her blood, for her father is the regisseur of Festival Ballet. Recently she has achieved a distinction rare among serious dancers of being

selected as a national pin up by Picture Post.

Julia Farron, who describes herself as the typical sort of Sadler's Wells dancer, also had a very successful role in *Rinaldo and Armida*, but she believes with the rapidly changing repertoire it is impossible to have a favourite role, although the system has the advantage of preventing staleness. She is one of the company's most experienced members, who, when she started as a child dancer at the Sadler's Wells theatre in 1934, was in her own words, one of the most undersized cygnets ever to appear in *Swan Lake*.

She has also had to cope with the handicap of shortsightedness, although she claims the only difficulty she experiences in this direction is that when making signals from the wings about entrances she has to engage the services of a third party. In conjunction with Margaret Dale she has appeared on Children's Television. One such ballet had a cowboy setting and when her five year old son learned this he insisted on his mother borrowing his cowboy hat everytime she

SONIA ROBERTS

*Takes Readers
Backstage
with
the*

SADLER'S
WELLS
BALLET
COMPANY



THE GARDEN

left for the studios. As a means of gaining a wider audience for ballet Julia Farron thinks television excellent, but she personally finds it a hard medium because of the absence of an audience.

She sees the Covent Garden audience as two separate elements the newcomers, visitors from the provinces or abroad, and the regular audience who know their dancers so well that they retain the intimate club atmosphere she encountered when she first joined the company.

Philip Chatfield, who also has a wide experience of the regular Sadler's Wells audience speaks strongly in their favour. He finds them discerning to a degree unmet on the continent, because despite their predilection for certain artists, they refuse to be hoodwinked. "A slipshod performance can prejudice the position of the most established favourite" he declares.

Chatfield joined the Sadler's Wells School at the age of eleven, his interest in dancing having been aroused at the local classes he attended with his sister in

Eastleigh.

His first appearance with the company was in *Casse Noisette* and for a fourteen-year-old the excitement of performances at the New Theatre, was heightened by having to dive under sinks and into cupboards for shelter during the frequent air raids. One of his more pleasant memories of those days is seeing Beryl Grey perform her first big role as the Lilac Fairy at Manchester. Despite a two year break in his career due to a knee injury, at eighteen he was back dancing with Ballet Theatre and then returned to the Covent Garden fold where he has since remained. He feels that classic and neo-classic ballet is the type most suited to the Opera House, and since this accords with his personal preference he is very contented in his niche. Those who expect melancholy unrest of a dancer will be disappointed in Philip Chatfield, who says he is happy because he is doing what he likes doing. This does not mean however, that he is averse to trying new things. He finds his role in *The Lady and the*

Fool particularly stimulating because it is a character part and outside his normal range. Away from the theatre Philip Chatfield's hobby is his tropical aquarium, the inhabitants of which he brings back as souvenirs of the company's tours.

Elaine Fifield is less placid. For her, dancing at Covent Garden has opened up new vistas of ambition because she is now in close contact with dancers like Fonteyn. She still finds the vastness of the company and auditorium a little disturbing. For this reason she is more nervous than at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, although she finds the audience easier to please. However, she feels strongly that a dancer's attitude to her work must be too deeply felt to be easily expressed, and that when speculation becomes a part of an artist's routine it is too often at the expense of more honest work. For Fifield time is precious. Her style of dancing must be made simpler to suit new conditions, new repertoire to be learned and new make-ups to be tried, and of course preparations

for the American tour.

By that time Ann Heaton's foot injury will be recovered, and she is looking forward to a fourth meeting with the audience she regards as the most enthusiastic in the world. This dancer who has also made the transition from being ballerina of the Theatre Ballet agrees that this period of beginning again is a difficult one, but points out that a dancer seldom has leisure for an organized hobby. She herself, finds keeping a flat, plus an occasional browse round an antique shop, fills every spare moment. She thinks that she was helped during the change-over time by her early training and feels that, with the present degree of organization, students at the Well's School gain in general education but lose in stagecraft. Ann Heaton, whose favourite role is *Giselle*, would like opportunities to develop her dramatic dancing but as at present these ambitions are hampered by the size of the company, it would not be surprising if this dancer's career took a new turn in the near future.

★ ★ ★ ★

L'Après Midi D'un Faune
Nadia Nerina & Alexis Rassine

★ ★ ★ ★

The Lady and The Fool
Philip Chatfield

★ ★ ★ ★

Svetlana Berisova in Rinaldo & Armida Exclusive BALLET TO-DAY photograph by Mike Davis

★ ★ ★ ★



★ ★ ★ ★

ON SEPTEMBER 3rd SADLER'S WELLS BALLET GIVE THEIR FINAL PERFORMANCE IN LONDON FOR SOME MONTHS. BALLET TO DAY JOINS ITS READERS IN WISHING THE COMPANY BON VOYAGE ON THEIR AMERICAN TOUR WHICH COMMENCES AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE NEW YORK ON SEPTEMBER 11th.

★ ★ ★ ★

Musician at the Ballet

ANTHONY POPE

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Madam,

The insults of Mr. Calman goad me. He writes of *Sylvia*: "The music is tea shop standard of the most sugary and the least inventive. It just pours out like insipid tea from a cold pot Weak Wagner flashing over simpering sentences of musical muck is my verdict of Leo Delibes's music for *Sylvia*". Now, I enjoyed *Sylvia* immensely; hence Mr. Calman's remarks are a monstrous affront to my taste.

But I am the least important of the many people whose judgment he dismisses with equal contempt. If we are to take him at his word: "An impressively expensive remounting announced the revival at Covent Garden of something best left in the graveyards of the ballets of yesteryear. . . . As I left Covent Garden's Opera House I wondered why so much money, time and effort had been lavishly spent on this revival", then Miss Margot Fonteyn, Miss Beryl Grey, and Miss Svetlana Beriosova have evidently lent their wonderful and lovely abilities to the perpetration of a gross and obvious imposture upon the public; while Messrs. Robert Irving and Anatole Fistoulari and the members of the Covent Garden Orchestra can choose to confess either to an ignorant lack of musical discrimination or to downright perversion of their art. To pursue the train of thought started by Mr. Calman to its logical conclusion, the Covent Garden Opera House has disgraced its Royal patronage, and abused by irresponsible expenditure the trust implicit in the financial privileges accorded by the State. As for the public, they must be chastened to think that their repeatedly enthusiastic receptions added a culminating touch of satire to a series of thoroughly discreditable and ridiculous performances.

Mr. Calman's opinion is undoubtedly sincere. Most people who love the Arts have sometimes had the experience of leaving an Opera or Ballet or Concert or Art Gallery with the feeling that their susceptibilities have been mocked. Mr. Calman is a journalist; that is to say, he has to be a lively writer; but he should not to that end aggressively give out his opinions as

absolute pronouncements, and treat the delicate excitements of Ballet with the robust rhetoric of a Sunday newspaper boxing columnist.

Art is as contentious and emotional a subject as religion or politics. One man's meat is another man's poison, and there is no explaining why. Artistic arguments can readily become inflamed; if they rarely do so it reflects the good sense, the tolerance, and the personal happiness of those for whom Art has a meaning.

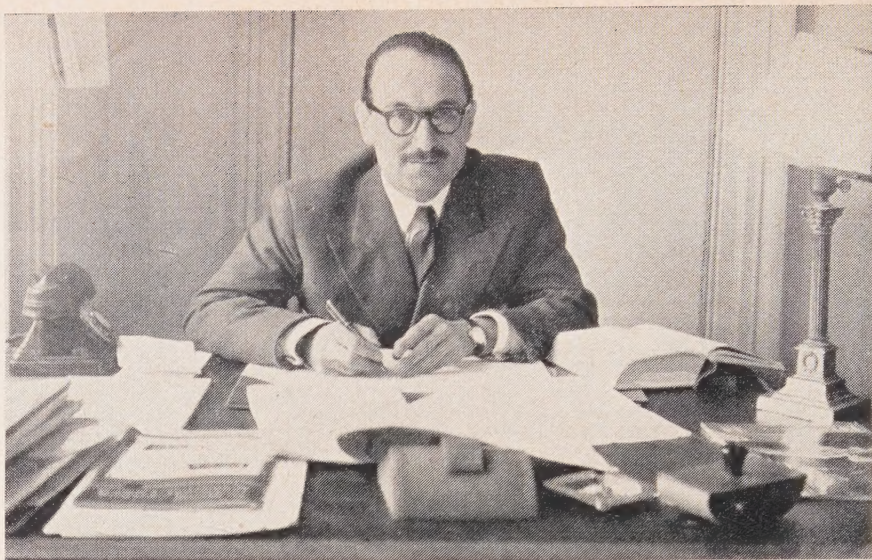
It is debatable whether Mr. Calman has seriously misled any of his readers, for balletomanes in general soon find out that the only judgment of much importance to them is their own; but our chief objections are in a different respect. Artistic criticism is not above the ordinary conventions of politeness. When we have praise to offer, we like to be generous; when we are obliged to censure, we take pains to be exact; and in a matter of personal taste we refer to our own fallibility.

However, the reader's part is not to teach the critic his business. Nevertheless he does the critic a disservice if he does not register any considerable indignation that the critic legitimately or otherwise provokes.

Mr. Calman is not the only Ballet Critic to live in the subjective world of his own impressions. He is not the only one to employ pointlessly exaggerated descriptions. He is not the only one who neither bothers to observe nor tries to understand the feelings of others. He is not the only one who sometimes fails to realise that Ballet Criticism is not a simple matter of recording black or white. If this protest effectively awakens him to the resentment of his readers when their interest in his comments is treated impudently, he may yet earn the admiration of

Yours faithfully,

Anthony D. Pope.



MONTAGUE CALMAN REPLIES

NO CARPING CYNIC

I was at a party the other week when one of those Bright Young Things said to me, "Golly! It must be excitingly wonderful to be a critic." Wonderful, it certainly is not; exciting it is, and should be.

Leonardo da Vinci, one of the greatest men of culture ever to have lived, wrote: "Knowledge of a thing engenders love of it, and the more exact the knowledge the more fervent the love." If I am critical of ballet it is not because I am a carping cynic. When we love a thing we expect it to live up to certain standards.

The morning after that party instead of a hangover I received a letter from a *BALLET TODAY* reader, Mr. Anthony Pope who lives off Hyde Park, London. He was very upset. He had enjoyed *Sylvia* immensely, while I had disliked it and said so. So for four carefully typed pages Mr. Pope had his say. What Mr. Pope obviously fails to realise is the essential difference between himself and the professional critic. The critic sees many performances of the same ballet and is trained to reduce all he sees and hears into the objective light of what is being achieved. Mr. Pope who basks in "The wonderful and lovely abilities" of Fonteyn, Grey and Beriosova, goes along to the Royal Opera House with his paid-for ticket. He has chosen his ballet because he likes it; he is out to enjoy himself. Subconsciously to react badly would be to tell himself he has made a bad choice. And so, he, like so many applauds and cheers. While I, attending the same show and judging it in the light of long experience and knowledge, often wonder how so much acclamation can be given for so little.

DEAD TRADITIONS

From his letter Mr. Anthony

Pope would seem to be a kind person, so he will forgive me if I claim that the critic has an essential function in the cultural scheme of things. Someone has to sit in judgment and make out objective reports. The doyen of music critics, Ernest Newman, once said, "One of the services of the critic is to give art room to breathe and grow by clearing away dead traditions from around it." I ask Mr. Pope to allow me to objectively survey the scene for those who are sufficiently liberal to want my personal viewpoint, while I hope he enjoys for many years the played to death pizzicato from *Sylvia*.

NEW BALLET

The Lady And The Fool was recently given at the Royal Opera House for the first time though many of us knew it at the Sadler's Wells Theatre. For the Covent Garden production choreographer Cranko had made some alterations. But though it has been recast and remoulded, and not for the better, the basic trouble remains. Verdi and his music should be kept in the true setting of the operatic world. I find it harrowing to have to hear these much loved arias used as a basis for Cranko's inappropriate dance movements. I am a great admirer of Giuseppe Verdi. The master of operatic writing knew how to wring the last ounce of emotion by ringing the right changes in music. But taken from its dramatic context the music becomes preposterous when used for a not very inspiring ballet. And Charles Mackerras has not been successful in his overscored arrangements of the original Verdi.

As a conductor that night Mackerras kept the brass virile, and at times there was a rich

Continued on page 22

CHABUKIANI

By

Mikhail Dolgoplov

VAKHTANG Chabukiani now lives and works in Tbilisi, the capital of Soviet Georgia. After graduating from the Leningrad ballet school he was for thirteen years a leading classical ballet dancer and later ballet master at the Kirov (formerly Mariinsky) theatre in Leningrad.

An excellent dancer, Chabukiani was given the principal parts in almost all classic ballets: that of Prince in the *Swan Lake* and the *Nutcracker* by P. I. Tchaikovsky, Albert in *Giselle* by A. Adam, Basil in *Don Quixote* by L. Minkus, Philippe in the *Flame of Paris* and Vaclav in the *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* by B. Asafiev.

Chabukiani's dance seems to amalgamate the fiery spirit of native Georgian dancing with the excellent rendering of the classical dance in the Leningrad ballet school tradition. The handsome athletic figure, elastic and graceful walk and an extraordinary sense of rhythm are the features characteristic of this outstanding dancer.

It was on the stage of the Kirov theatre in Leningrad, where he made his first ballet steps and participated in various performances as ballet student, that this remarkable dancer produced his first ballets: the *Heart of the Mountains* by Andrei Balanchivadze and *Laurencia* by Alexander Krein, which brought him immediate fame.

In solving the problems presented by the stagecraft of ballet Chabukiani thinks of the dance and its patterns as an artist would think of colours and lines. He resolutely rejected the entertainment principle so characteristic of the old classical ballet; instead, the dances staged by him are closely woven into the pattern of the story.

Soon after the production of his first ballets in Leningrad, Chabukiani returned to his native Tbilisi, which, like all other capitals of the Soviet republics, has its own opera and ballet theatre. The brilliant dancer and ballet master was appointed chief ballet master of the theatre where he immediately organised a choreography studio. Choreography instructors, graduates from the Leningrad ballet school became his active assistants.

In his dancing classes Chabukiani trained the students and dancers in the best traditions of the Russian classical ballet school, employing for this purpose the programme of the Leningrad school. Such methods yielded excellent results and the Tbilisi ballet troupe became one of the



dancers, graduates of the choreography studio. While still studying at the studio they danced in the ballets produced by the theatre.

Vakhtang Chabukiani told me that the studio has definitely outgrown its original purpose and had actually developed into a ballet school. At present the Ministry of Culture of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic is erecting a special building to house the school. The students will have a programme both in special and general subjects.

At present Chabukiani is completing the production of Tchaikovsky's ballet the *Nutcracker*. The first production of this ballet by the great Russian composer dates back to December 6, 1892 when it was staged by the ballet master Lev Ivanov according to the outlines of Petipa in the Mariinsky Theatre of St. Petersburg. Since then the ballet has been changed partially on many occasions, but its best dances still remain the pride of Russian classical ballet.

Enthusiastic about his work, Chabukiani told me that he is staging nearly the entire ballet in a new version.

contd on page twenty

Left: In *Laurencia*

Below: With S. M. Gottlieb in *Flame of Paris*

best in the land, second only to those of Moscow and Leningrad.

Chabukiani produced many ballets at the Tbilisi theatre: *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote*, *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, and staged anew the *Heart of the Mountains* and *Laurencia*; he also produced three new Georgian national ballets *Gorda*, *Sinaitle (The Light)*, and *For Peace*.

Not so long ago I chanced to visit Tbilisi, where I enjoyed very much the ballets *Heart of the Mountains* and *Gorda* but most of all the artistry of Chabukiani that has not tarnished with the years. His high leaps executed with such ease and grace, his pirouettes and skilful support of the ballerinas in the most difficult duets were, as usual, enthusiastically acclaimed by the public. Mass scenes and other dances were excellently staged and executed.

The ballets staged in Tbilisi have shown that Chabukiani has trained a host of talented youth and first among them ballerinas Vera Tsignadze, Irina Alexidze, Yevgenia Gelovani and dancers Zurab Kikaleishvili, Tangiz Sanadze, Suren Gorsky, Revaz Magalashvili. This year the ballet troupe of the Tbilisi theatre has been joined by eight new gifted



THE ALICIA

Part One : THE

FROM Portugal to the Philippines, from Chicago to Copenhagen, Alicia Markova has delighted ballet audiences. She has danced in halls, in theatres, in cinemas, and in opera houses in most of the principal cities on either side of the Atlantic. She has achieved an almost unique position in the sphere of ballet for she has become, as it were, the first great *universal* ballerina; for although British by birth, and brought up in London, where she attended her first classes; her upbringing as a dancer was in the Russian style pertaining to the latter days of Diaghilev's company, where she had her first important engagement.

UNIVERSAL BALLERINA

Since those early days, she has appeared as ballerina with, to name only a few, the Sadler's Wells Ballet, Ballet Theatre, The Winnipeg Ballet, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the Markova-Dolin Ballet, and the Festival Ballet, so one cannot exactly say that she has confined and devoted her

attentions to any one particular company, but rather she has devoted herself to ballet as a whole.

When Alicia Markova joined Diaghilev's company in 1925, she discarded the name by which she had formerly been called, Alicia Marks; a custom which has now become outmoded, since it is no longer either fashionable or necessary to adopt a Russian sounding name. At the time Diaghilev auditioned this young English girl, who was not yet even sixteen years old, it would have required a critic of almost superhuman perception to foresee that this child was to develop into a ballerina, whose *Giselle* was to be acclaimed the whole world over. She was to become in time the true romantic ballerina, the queen of the classic art, to whom the lyricism of the ballets of Michel Fokine were to be ideally suited.

In fact the first role in which the young Markova attracted meritorious attention was in Fokine's *Carnaval*, when she danced the role of Papillion, which had been



MARKOVA STORY

ADOR OF BALLET

originally created by Bronislava Nijinska. There were other small roles to follow, notably as one of the Cygnets in *Le Lac des Cygnes*, and in *Les Sylphides*.

Between 1925 and 1929, when on Diaghilev's death the company finally dispersed to various engagements throughout the world, she danced a number of roles. Although she was by no means a principal dancer in the company, she had gained vast experience which was to stand her in good stead for the future, for it had provided her with a strong disciplinary basic background, without which no dancer is really complete, and in later years this was to prove invaluable.

ASHTON AND TUDOR

In 1931 she joined the Ballet Club, which was in the hands of Marie Rambert. It was here that she first worked for two young choreographers, whose creative flair and genius were to play a great part in the future in the fashioning of her career; the two young unknowns were Frederick

Ashton and Anthony Tudor.

TELEVISION

Markova danced in Ashton's *Rio Grande*, and as the Polka in *Facade*; she appeared as Myrrhina in Tudor's *Lysistrata*. Soon she was to make her debut on television a medium with which she has long been associated, but in those early days she could well have described herself as one of its pioneers, for she has made countless appearances on the screen, both in this country and in the United States. It is a medium in which she has expressed her faith by her very loyalty and devotion. She recognised it then as a suitable medium for ballet, which only recently has been universally accepted and appreciated. In the days before the war it was still treated in many quarters as a subject for derision and music-hall jokes.

WITH THE VIC-WELLS

In 1933 Markova was invited to join the Vic-Wells organ-



isation as a ballerina. She was to remain with the company for two years during its teething stages; she greatly helped to set the company on its feet. During her stay she created roles in Ashton's *Les Rendez-vous*, and in De Valois' *Haunted Ballroom*; she appeared in *Giselle* and in *Swan Lake*, which was being given its first performance in its entirety by an English company.

In 1935 she created the role of the Betrayed Girl, in *The Rake's Progress*, but although her performance was of her usual high standard, it was not a role that was ideally suited to her personality and capabilities.

Up to this point, I have purposely made no mention of the one person whose name will be forever associated with that of Markova, Anton Dolin. Their partnership has been one of the greatest in the whole history of ballet; no two dancers have perhaps ever become so interwoven and united in their art.

V.C.

Opposite Page

Top Left: La Camargo

Bottom Left: Giselle

Bottom Right:

As the Betrayed girl in Rakes

Progress

Next Month

Part II

MARKOVA

and DOLIN

and their

GISELLE

Alicia Markova first appeared in Television in the early 1930's. Left: an exclusive Ballet Today photograph taken by Mike Davis in the *Music for You* programme on June 20th.

News in Pictures



Munich T.V. starts ballet. Joan Harris rehearsing Coppelia with Irene Skorik as Swanilda and Michel de Lutry as Doctor Coppelius.
Photo : W. Sahn

Rehearsal snapshot of Michel de Lutry with the Kessler twins for the forthcoming musical comedy film Your Daughter and Mine. (See Backstage).
Photo : Hubman.



Vaslav Veltchek, choreographer Arthur Perreira and members of the Corps de Ballet of the Teatro Municipal, Rio de Janeiro after a performance of Uirapuri, music by Villa-Lobos.

Violetta Elvin, John Field and Tatiana Leskova on stage at the Teatro Municipal, Rio de Janeiro after a performance of Giselle.
Both photos: Claudio Albuquerque



BACKSTAGE

THE Association of Ballet Clubs Summer School, to be held at St. Mary's Gate, Bourne-mouth from 6th-13th August, will have a varied and interesting programme each evening, including a performance of *The Choice* by Students of The Bourne-mouth Ballet Club. This is a full-length ballet with choreography by **Felicity Gray**, who hopes to be present. As reported last month, **Mr. Claude Newman** will conduct morning classes. Inclusive charge for the week's Summer School is 7½ guineas (which includes board and lodging).

A break away from the all too common Viennese operetta-style and an approach to the American musical style with its lightness and vitality will be brought into German movie production by **Domini Callaghan** and **Michel de Lutry**, who took over dance direction in *Your Daughter and Mine*. They are introducing a combination of a dozen different ideas, based on classical, modern and tap steps. One of the highlights of the dance sequences is a parody on the rather outrageous eccentricities of **Marilyn Monroe**, danced in duplicate by the **Kessler twins**, newly discovered stars just escaped from East-Germany. **M. de Lutry** is partnering Frankfurt ballerina **Irene Mann** in a lyrical pas de deux. **John Bubbles**, the celebrated coloured tutor of **Fred Astaire**, features both with fascinating tap and fine rhythmic feeling in jungle-mambo. The 45 dancers have great respect for English methods of arranging and composing ideas which are different from their past background of training. Having made a start, the London dance couple have already received a lot of further proposals to join other film productions as ambassadors of English dance direction.

Axel Kaun

LABANOTATED excerpts from the great standard ballets, teaching materials, and dance recital pieces in printed form will soon be found on the counters of your nearest music dealer. A new Dance and Ballet Publication Department has recently been established in New York for the preparation, printing, distribution, and pro-

motion of choreographic works. Amongst the works to be published will be five instruction books by **Nadia Chilkovsky**, intended to help the beginner learn dance technique and Labanotation simultaneously. Another book will contain eight dances by **Adele Hooper Hugo**, and is designed for use with classes of various age levels. It will provide material for an entire teaching season, including a year-end recital, word description as well as Labanotation and music, costume sketches, complete staging direction, etc.

NEW York City Board of Education provides professional dance training for children, as part of their free High School education, through a unique institution, the Dance Department of the School of Performing Arts. They presented two performances on June 1st and 2nd under the supervision of **Patricia Casey** and **Nancy Lang**. Capezio Inc. made a generous grant towards the production costs.

BALLET Espanol de Teresa Band Luisillo will tour the United States commencing October 31st, starting their North American tour in Chicago.

KAMIN Dance Bookshop and Gallery of New York City recently announced the opening of the first circulating library in

Taina Elg



the United States exclusively devoted to books in all departments of the Dance.

TAINA Elg, petite, vivacious dance star, makes her screen debut as the slave girl Elissa in *The Prodigal*.

At 18, she was enrolled in the highest class at Sadler's Wells. Because she could not get a labour permit to dance professionally in England, **Taina** auditioned for the Monte Carlo Ballet, now the Marquis de Cuevas Ballet and travelled for four years with the Company in many countries, including the United States.

B.B.C. (Home Service) presented the first programme of a series *Ballet of our Time* on June 7th when **John Lanchbery**, of the Sadler's Wells Company conducted **Sir William Walton's** music for the ballet *Facade*, **Shostakovich's Age of Gold**, **Strauss's Le Beau Danube**, and **Geoffrey Toye's Haunted Ballroom**. Future programmes in this series will include *Checkmate* with music by **Sir Arthur Bliss**; *Rodeo* by the American composer **Aaron Copland**; *Gaite Parisienne*; *The Sailor's Return* and the ballet music for the film *The Red Shoes* by **Brian Easdale**. At the end of the series it is hoped to present music by the Russian composer **Aram Khachaturyan**, who recently visited this country, for a ballet called *Spartacus* which, as yet, has only been seen in Moscow; also **Federico Mompou's** music which **John Lanchbery** recently orchestrated for **Kenneth Macmillan's** new ballet *House of Birds*.

Other Conductors in the series will include **Robert Irving** from Covent Garden, **Leighton Lucas** who was himself once a ballet dancer, and **Charles Mackerras**, who before his present appointment as conductor of the BBC Concert Orchestra was on the staff of Sadler's Wells as conductor and coach, and whose ballet music *Pineapple Poll* has become extremely popular.

CONTRIBUTORS to the Tail Waggon Magazine feature "My favourite pet's picture" have in the past included **Sir Winston Churchill** and **Mrs. Eisenhower**. This month's contributor is **Svetlana Beriosova**.

PEGGY Van Praagh, Assistant Director of the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company, will be released from this appointment as from the end of 1955 in order to undertake the work of reproduction in overseas countries of certain ballets in the repertoires of the Sadler's Wells Companies.

A new appointment—that of Resident Director of the Theatre Ballet Company—has been accepted by **John Field** one of the Principal Dancers of the Sadler's Wells Company, and Covent Garden have agreed to release him at the end of that Company's forthcoming American tour.

Miss **Ninette de Valois'** position as Artistic Director of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet Company remains unchanged.

TWENTY Minutes South first produced at the Players' Theatre Club in May this year, opened at St. Martin's Theatre on 13th July. This modern British musical is devised and composed by 25 year-old **Peter Greenwell**, the book and lyrics are by **Maurice Browning**.

ROVI Pavinoff, the Australian dancer, returns to the British Ballet scene as leading dancer and Artistic Director with the newly formed Cosmopolitan Ballet, which opened at Harrow on the 25th July, prior to a season in Ireland.

DET Danske Selskab have arranged to print in English a short book on The Royal Danish Ballet, text by **Svend Kragh-Jacobsen** and illustrations by **Mydtskov** and **Baron**.

A. & C. Black Ltd. have agreed to undertake its publication and distribution in this country and it is hoped to publish the book in time for the Edinburgh Festival. Price 10/6d.

Readers have written in asking the name of the dancer appearing on our back page advertisement of July **BALLET TODAY**. This was **Jill Ireland**, who has now been given a contract by **J. Arthur Rank**.

Photograph by **Mike Davis**.

PHYLLIS BEDELLS

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The Young

THE third annual performance by the pupils of the Classical School of Ballet directed by Mariella Turitto Alessandri, took place at the Fenice Opera House on the 18th June before a large and enthusiastic audience. The following works were performed :-

1. The classical dance by the junior pupils to suites selected from Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*.
2. The classical dance by the senior pupils to the music of Bach's *First suite in C Major*.
3. A ballet, choreography by Signora Alessandri, to the music of Debussy's *La Mer*.
4. A ballet, choreography by Signora Alessandri, to the music of Moussorgsky's *Night on a Bare mountain*.

Thus, for one night in the year Venice presents its own ballet in the most beautiful theatre in the world. It is a night the dancers can never forget. Accompanied by the splendid Opera orchestra of 70 players, these children dance before their parents and friends; they transform themselves and, by so doing, revive the ancient glories of the Italian dance. By the charming variety obtained from the dancing of very young children when contrasted with that of the seniors, both groups succeed in delighting the general audience that, at the Fenice, is always international and critical.

When one considers that Signora Alessandri in addition to teaching some hundred pupils

(ranging in age from 3½ to 17), also choreographs all the dances and ballets herself, the reader will realise something of the Herculean task she sets herself each year, as well as the patience and immense talent required to bring such labours to fruition. As for the capabilities of her pupils, it is not too much to say that some half dozen or more are sufficiently trained to take their place on the professional stage, whilst her leading soloist, Alessandra Vianello, can even now probably challenge comparison with any dancer in Italy.

The peak of the evening was reached with the production of Debussy's *La Mer* as a ballet. The present writer invites correction, but believes that a choreographic setting of this famous work has not been seen until now, at all events not in Italy or France. It was therefore awaited with considerable curiosity and interest. Taking a slender theme as basis, Signora Alessandri constructed from it a highly complex and varied choreography, one that reflected the changing moods of the music, whilst retaining its individuality and never losing sight of the theme—this, in contrast to the work of Balanchine where the theme, if present at all, is generally sacrificed to mere abstractions of movement, however beautiful in themselves.

One particularly striking moment given to the corps de ballet was when two lines of Tritons and Sirens, each line at the interval of a few bars of music

Class-room of School of Classical Dancing

General View of Senior's Class with Alessandra Vianello standing.



Dancer



Final Tableau of classical dances by the seniors (Music: Bach's first suite in C Major)
Scenery by Mario Rouchese and Antonio Orlandini

Alessandra Vianello in centre foreground.
Taken on Stage of the Venice Opera House during dress-rehearsal.

swept down to the foot-lights, giving the impression of bounding over the waves and reaching the shore. This impression was heightened by the extremely realistic setting of rocks and waves breaking round them.

Night on a Bare Mountain, which concluded the programme, provided opportunity both for a brilliantly lurid stage-setting and for the choreographer to build an elaborate counterpoint of mass movement in simulation of confusion and wild abandonment. A special word of praise must be given here to three dancers; Annalise Piamonte, Bianca Agnolletto, and Marialuisa Benvenuti, who in these ballets sustained difficult travesti roles in support of Alessandra Vianello.

The extremely individual and striking scene effects were devised and carried out personally by Mario Rouchese assisted by Antonio Orlandini, whilst the cyclorama cloud effects in *La Mer*

were realised by Pierantonio Fabris. Costumes by Casa d'Arte Cerratelli of Florence.

The orchestra of the Fenice Opera House conducted by Maitre Gustave Cloez from the Paris Conservatoire, played with the greatest precision and delicacy of nuance.

Robert Paterson

THE Elmhurst Ballet School of Camberley appeared on Television on June 20th. Entitled *Growing in Grace*, the programme featured dancing in various forms and stressed the aim of the School to teach girls to be not only good dancers but also good Christians.

Life on the stage separates theatrical folk from the normal life of a parish. Young dancers spend much of their time travelling—usually on Sundays. The School tries to remedy this

deficiency by training its pupils in Christian life and faith equal to that in the dancing and intellectual spheres, and, when they leave School, to link them to the Actors' Church Union.

Madame Karsavina, deputising as President at the Fifth Annual Congress of the Federation of Russian Classical Ballet gave this advice to parents "In assisting your children to become artists you can help the teacher in many ways, teach your children to be practical in the care and maintenance of their clothes and stage costumes, put good literature their way, encourage them to read poetry, take them to hear good music, and to visit museums and exhibitions of art".

The Congress ended with a performance at the Rudolf Steiner Theatre, with over eighty performers from eight schools. During the interval Madame

Karsavina presented certificates to the successful candidates. There were eight Honours winners.

For the fourth year the Bristol School of Dancing presented a programme at the Theatre Royal.

This year's works included *Peter and the Wolf* and *Celeste and Celestina* produced by Peter Darrell using a cast of Theatre and Ballet students. The choreography was by Elizabeth West and Peter Darrell and decor by Phyllida Law.

Proceeds were in aid of the Bristol Association of Girls and mixed Youth Clubs.

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ROUND THE BASIC

NOWADAYS ballet is recognised as a very important form of education. Not only because of the satisfaction it gives, by developing inherent talent and a means of expression, but also because it stimulates beauty in movement and in repose. Success in life depends very much on the way we face the situations that arise. The sense of security and poise that springs from conscious grace—the sort of grace that ballet-training gives—is a highly valuable asset. Furthermore the very discipline of that training develops courage, concentration, patience and persistence. There is also, of course, the important question of health. Since no great proficiency can be attained without close attention to physical fitness, dancers usually enjoy the best of health. But it is of the greatest importance in the early stages of training to proceed by very slow and gradual stages, under the guidance of a teacher fully qualified to steer the pupil clear of any overstrain or misuse of that most delicate instrument, the human body, says Jan Cieplinski. To

him, every pupil is an embryo artist—an individual “creation” which cannot be subjected to mass-production methods.

“A teacher who thinks only in terms of fees, turning out ‘dancers’ as if from a sausage-machine, is rendering no service to ballet”, he maintains. Too often little prodigies, who are forced along to resemble fully-fledged ballerinas before they have reached their teens, pay dearly later in foot troubles, weak knees and other disabilities.

He also insists on selective recruitment, never accepting as a pupil any applicant who in his opinion cannot make the grade.

“Leaving aside physical essentials (I do not, for instance, consider a child with a weak spine or any malformation to be a suitable candidate for ballet, much as other forms of dancing and remedial exercises will sometimes benefit such children) what I look for most is a feeling for dance”, he says. “This I usually discover in the very first interview by starting the aspirant off with some very simple rhythmic movements. This enables me to



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STUDIOS

EXERCISES

A series of Interviews
by E. Corathiel
with
Jan Cieplinski
The famous Polish Maitre de Ballet

estimate the capacity of the child's memory, intelligence, musical appreciation and, above all, sense of rhythm. It is, of course, a great asset if a child has natural grace, though grace *can* be acquired. Feeling is another matter. Upon this inborn gift will depend whatever use the pupil makes of the knowledge the teacher can pass on".

"Fortunately," he added, "this natural temperament is not so rare among children as might be supposed. Modern education helps us to detect it in countless cases where it was previously unsuspected. The fact that youngsters nowadays are taken to see high-class ballet from a very early age helps them to form a standard of taste; and even where theatre visits are not possible, they have almost unhampered access to good music through the medium of radio and television. Enlightened educational bodies budget quite liberally for musical appreciation courses, and countless earnest teachers up and down the country are by their own enthusiasm opening up new worlds

of artistic sensibility to the young".

Pylades, the Latin dancer, declared once that no one who did not understand music, painting, sculpture and geometry could become perfect in the art of dance-mime. It is because Italian opera-ballet (later called 'classical' ballet) is based on this truth that it has survived longer than any other system, all the later methods being derived from it.

"Every now and then a supremely great dancer arises—one who invents personal tricks or evolves individual methods of accomplishing brilliant technical effects", Mr. Cieplinski went on. "But the old artists did not seek to publicise themselves by tacking their name to an entirely new brand of 'system'. Cecchetti never called his teaching by his own name—he taught the pure Italian method. It was only after his death that people started talking about the 'Cecchetti method'. When you boil all the different methods down, what is of value in them comes back to the original scientific

rules; and where these rules are flouted, deterioration sets in. There are no short cuts. And once the basic technique has been mastered, individual creation begins. One must never forget that diplomas do not make artists!"

As a child learning to read must first learn the alphabet, and no serious musician can avoid practising scales, so also the ballet-beginner must start by memorising the five fundamental positions of the feet and those of the arms. Systematic bar exercises then follow. Some teachers have their own ideas as to how these should be conducted, but Jan Cieplinski says the Italian method lays down clear rules which permit of no deviation. That does not, of course, mean that the exercises should be allowed to become monotonous. Interest is kept alive by varying the tempi and by the dynamic quality of the musical accompaniment.

Let us take the most elementary exercise, the plié.

1. The correct way to start plié exercises at the bar, says Jan Cieplinski, is always from the 1st position. One hand resting lightly on the bar, waist drawn in, head held high with eyes straight ahead, buttocks and spinal muscles contracted and the free arm extended in first position:

- (a) With the body leaning slightly forward, the knees are slowly bent, but they should spread *outwards*, never forward in a sitting position. The heels remain firmly on the floor.
- (b) While this movement is being done, the free arms should

move slowly downwards with a sweeping movement, then to the 1st position *devant*.

- (c) Then, as the upright position is resumed, the heels are raised as the body rises, and the free arm also rises, gracefully sweeping outwards.
- (d) Finally, when the body is again erect, the heels return to the ground. The knees are stretched gradually, and the free arm is now back in its original position. (In the plié from 1st position, the heels are on the ground for the first half of the exercise and raised for the second half).

2. The next plié exercise starts with the feet in 2nd position. The heels remain on the ground throughout. The arm movements are the same as for the plié in 1st position.

3. Plié from 3rd position. In this, the heel of one foot is brought in front of the heel of the other, the toes being so well turned out that the two arches form parallel lines. The outer leg is straightened, and, moving forward as in position 2, is brought with a *degagé* and closed to position 3. The bending is as in position 1 (heels on ground for the first half, half-toe for the second half). Great care should be taken to balance the weight of the body equally on both feet, keeping the torso rigidly erect.

4. Two different exercises are involved in the next plié. In the 4th position *ouverte*, the heels, as in position 2, do not move off the ground. In the 4th position *croisé*, the heels move as in the 1st, 3rd, and 5th.



Plié

*First and Second part
of exercise.*

Photos: Mike Davis)

In our next interview
Mr. Cieplinski will
discuss centre work.

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BALLERINA PHOTOGRAPHS, BALLET TODAY,
15 Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

contd. from page eleven

contd. from page six

CHABUKIANI

"This, of course, does not mean that I wish to improve the dance arrangements by Lev Ivanov, but I have thought up many new things," said Chabukiani, "I wish to present the leading characters in the ballet in a more realistic, human way."

When I asked him about his plans for the future, Chabukiani replied that his ambition was to produce a ballet based on Shakespeare's tragedy *Othello*. "I wish to persuade composer Aram Khachaturyan to write music for *Othello*. It has always been my dream to stage this ballet."

Together with Vakhtang Chabukiani I visited the Tbilisi motion picture studios Georgia-Film, where he supervised the production of a film *Dancers of Georgia*. This film shows the principal dancing scenes from the ballets *Laurencia* and *Sinatra*. Apart from Chabukiani the film will show other leading dancers appearing in these ballets on the stage of the Tbilisi theatre.

FRANCE

into it. Let us hope that he will purge from the programme some few ballets which have no place there, and with which the repertoire had, in his absence been cumbered.

We greet the forthcoming return of that magnificent dancer George Zoutch, who, if he has not always the skill needed to express himself freely, has an interesting talent.

Madame Nijinska wishes to direct the ballet *Brahms Variations* again, which has already had a deserved success. Why does she not choose, rather, the humorous masterpiece *The Hundred Kisses* which would give Zoutch and Melikova an opportunity to shine?

Alas! Rosella Hightower will not return to the Company—immediately, at least. She has to take part in the anniversary presentations of the Ballet Theatre—but one still hopes to see her, in the Paris Season.

Jean Coquille

SHARING the LAURELS

— Susan Lester —

EVERYONE has heard by now that changes in the personnel of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet have taken place and that the company will be working on a more concentrated provincial tour in the future. The artists involved include Maryon Lane, Patricia Miller, Annette Page and David Poole. Of these, it seems that only Annette Page had been the subject of an early arrangement to transfer to Covent Garden, in accordance with a policy of the Sadler's Wells organisation to interchange artists where this seemed appropriate. Patricia Miller and David Poole are leaving to go abroad and Maryon Lane recently asked to be moved to Covent Garden herself—a request which was granted.

ADMIRABLE POLICY

No-one will deny that it is an admirable policy to have a system whereby artists within an organisation are interchangeable. Michael Boulton is leaving Covent Garden to go to the Wells and a few years back Kenneth Macmillan did the same. He indeed, is proof of the value of these transfers, for his two ballets, *Dances Concertantes* and *House of Birds*, recently mounted for the Wells have given the company two of its most worthy new works, introduced an interesting collaboration with a new designer, Nicholas Georgiadis and provided vehicles for the talents of many artists, notably Maryon Lane.

EFFECT OF TRANSFERS

The fact that Miss Lane will now be assuming roles at Covent Garden leads us to another point in considering the effects of transfers. The tendency is now becoming a rather one-sided rigidity whereby valuable artists, especially amongst the girls, are leaving the Wells for Covent Garden, while few are returning to add spice to the repertoire at the smaller theatre.

ORIGINAL CREATORS

It would be both worthless and untrue to suggest that the ballets at the Wells survive only through the touches of their original creators—we have only to think of *The Rake's Progress* of recent years to realise that contemporary artists achieve great success in older works—but there are artists whose inheritance of the onus of a

classically-ponderous repertoire does not allow them the opportunity to show the public what they can do in an entirely different repertoire in a smaller theatre. Certainly, Margot Fonteyn gave a matinée performance of *Swan Lake Act II* at the Wells a few years ago; while Robert Helpmann, Walter Gore and Alexander Grant have appeared there too. But who will say that the soubrette talents of Nadia Nerina and Elaine Fifield did not lend themselves completely to the little Wells repertoire. There was never a Poll like Fifield and the sprite-like, quicksilver charm of her roles in *Pastorale*, *Coppelia* and *Carnaval* will be missed by her audiences. It is no doubt a wise move to let her try to adapt herself to the requirements of roles in ballets where the smoothness of the whole is more important than anything else. But Miss Nerina has been playing a long while now in the "ballerina" full-lengths at the Garden and it is seldom we have the chance to see her in a worthwhile role of another order.

ENDLESS PAS DE DEUX

Remembering their worth in more varied roles, one dislikes the thought of Fifield, Blair, Trecu and now Lane, confining their appearances to endless classical pas de deux, pas de trois, pas de six or fairy princes and princesses, however much we may approve their inclusion in the Covent Garden scene.

Changes, through one cause or another, happen so gradually, like water falling on a stone, that we are not aware of the indentation for some while. The repertoire at Sadler's Wells Theatre has always been worthy, as indeed, have the artists, and recently it has shown itself to be achieving a higher all-round standard than we have seen from any ballet company, whether at home or from abroad. It is now up to the artists staying with the company to maintain that standard. If others are interchanged from Covent Garden, it will not be, we hope, to help them out. But we should just like to think that every Poll, Captain Belaye, Harlequin and other heroes and heroines, will have the chance to re-capture and share the laurels that once they helped to win at the Sadler's Wells theatre. Let us have the fullest advantage of those varied talents!

"There are so many admirable articles written stressing the importance of correct technical training for the ballet dancer" writes Norah Webber "and so few on the desirability of ballet training for every branch of show business".

• • • • •

I agree. As there are so few "places in the sun" for ballerinas, branches of the theatre in which their training can be used, must, of necessity, be very important to the dance world in general. Miss Webber sets out her opinions below.

Editor

Dramatic Art Through Ballet Training

WHILE scanning the June issue of **BALLET TODAY**, my attention was arrested by the following sentence, "Its power lies rather in the personalities, the complete

assurance and acting ability of its dancers.

My mind sped immediately to the converse aspect of this truth, namely, how much depends, in a play, upon the *dancing ability of the principal actors*. Perhaps it is only to a dancer that the balletic conception of a play, (especially in the case of Shakespearian productions), enhances its value as a satisfying whole. I believe that there has been much controversy with regard to a recent Shakespearian season in which the plays have been produced by a famous ballet dancer. This has brought about violent reactions from two parties: those in favour of the result, and those who are

any art form.

A dancer must act and an actor must dance. The two arts should be inseparable. Is the English ballet training too sparing of dramatic content? True, much time is given to the handing on of the set and traditional mime of the classical ballet, but is this of any use for modern entertainment? Who is likely to know, for instance, (except those who have undergone a similar training), that a vertical movement of the thumb and forefinger astride the face means "a handsome man"? To the untrained onlooker this gesture is incomprehensible and looks more than a little silly.

readily breaks down self-consciousness and inhibitions, which are responsible in so many ballet productions for maintaining that icy barrier which separates the stage from the auditorium. In a ballet, after the technical skill has been taken for granted, it is the dramatic rendering and the personality of the dancer which appeal. Technical virtuosity will never alone hold the interest of the general public and will never really gain for ballet a widespread public support, upon which, one day, it may have to depend. Frequently a small ballet by a small company can be witnessed with interest a second time, whereas a lavishly

strongly opposed to it. No-one who has been fortunate enough to see these productions can remain in a state of neutrality. This is good. It is indifference which is the incipient herald of

But how many ballet dancers could act convincingly a passage from a modern play? Most would lack confidence and fail thereby. Training in dramatic interpretation of the spoken word

dressed and geometrically perfect technical ensemble has difficulty in stimulating a second interest.

Therefore I would train actors and dancers alike to act through dancing. This is the method that I employ in my school and for its success I attribute my authority to outstandingly good results gained by my pupils in examination with dramatic excerpts, (Shakespearian in particular.) An instruction might be: Enter top L., run across stage five steps, finish in second arabesque à terre: look off R: turn and run down L. with slight port de bras through demi-seconde: look off L.: transfer weight and leave arms in Cecchetti third: speak: walk R.: pause in dégagé second, same épaulement: speak: take two deep chassés back, body inclined well forward: speak during chassés . . . and so on. According to the character to be portrayed similar instructions are applied and modified. Balletic patterns are built up for characters so widely different as Ariel in *The Tempest*, and old Adam in *As you Like It*. The production in this manner is readily comprehended by dramatic students trained in dancing and the results are quick and satisfactory.

Editorial Note.—

Norah Webber has trained many students who have subsequently done well in Drama and Musical Comedy as a direct result of their ballet training. She has been particularly successful with boys, three of whom are now appearing with first class managements both here and in America.

One of Norah Webber's pupils, Sandra Hurst age 15 as she appeared at the school display at Richmond Theatre. Now studying for her General Certificate, she will then do professional work, having already received an offer.

Photo: Eric Coop.



SPECIAL OFFER

WE have had many requests for Binders to hold copies of **BALLET TODAY**. These will be ready about 15th October. To hold 24 issues, each copy bound by thin wire, opens flat at any page, copies can easily be removed. Spine marked in gold blocking "BALLET TODAY".

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DISCS

Le Group des Six

MUSICIAN at the BALLET

Continued from page 10

COLUMBIA has brought out a first class pair of discs, 33CX1252-3, which includes an introductory talk by Jean Cocteau, followed by one work of each of the French composers known as *Les Six*. Honegger's score was for Ida Rubinstein's melodrama, *Amphion*—Massine creating the choreography and Benois, the decor. The other balletic work in this collection is Auric's for Lifar's interesting ballet, *Phedre*, which was seen when the Paris Opera Ballet visited Covent Garden. How the personality of that fine artist, Nina Vyroubova, dominated the stage! Georges Tzipine and the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra give excellent performances, which serve as a good introduction to anyone not acquainted with this group.

There are two more "collective" discs covering a wide range. Popular Favourites, HMV.ALP 1235, includes, amongst other items, Brahms' *Hungarian Dances*, *The Dance of the Hours* and the *Egmont Overture*—part of Tudor's *La Gloire*. The NBC Symphony Orchestra responds amazingly to Toscanini's power and drive. It is unfair to stand Charles Munch beside Toscanini but nevertheless his performances of the *Rapsodie Espagnole* and *La Valse*, as well as three overtures, are reasonably good on HMV.ALP 1245. These discs will give pleasure to those who want variety.

And here we have the choice of two *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, that very attractive work of Falla, which is so often used by visiting Spanish companies.

On Columbia 33CX1221, Halffter drags the pace to such an extent that I found I was losing interest. With Argenta, London TW91019, the whole thing becomes alive and drenched with smoldering colour and the atmosphere of semi-tropical flowers making the air heavy with their scent. Also the recording is much superior.

Andrée Howard's *Festin de l'Araignée* gave opportunities to some younger dancers in the Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1943. Pauline Clayden was the Mayfly, Moira Shearer the Butterfly, while Celia Franca gave a powerful interpretation as the Spider. Ernest Ansermet conducting the Suisse Romande Orchestra, Decca LXT 5035, has a nice sense and feel of Roussell's balletic score which, coupled with a fine recording, makes this an excellent disc.

There were some delightful touches in Lichine's *Helen of Troy*—in particular the Faun. I am sure it would do us all good to see it again. The Ballet Theatre Orchestra with Levine conducting, has recorded the scintillating Offenbach music on Capitol CTL 7082, coupled with his *Bluebeard* music for Fokine's ballet. Offenbach needs a light, gay but elegant touch which very few conductors have in the right proportion and here, Levine does not seem to be amongst them. Also to me, the recording is clear but harsh and occasionally the brass is almost unbearable.

Sir Thomas Beecham has always had a soft spot in his heart for Balakirev's *Thamar*, so that we now have three very

good versions of Fokine's ballet. On the reverse side of this present record, Philips ABL 3047, is a magnificent performance of Dvorak's *Symphonic Variations*—one I shall treasure. In contrast, Otterloo conducting the Vienna S.O., gives a dull interpretation of the Suites from the *Sleeping Beauty* and *Casse-Noisette*, Philips NBL 5005. He drags the tempo, does not work up the big crescendi and there is no excitement or grandeur.

On the fourth side of a good performance of Mahler's *Ninth Symphony* by the Israel P.O. under Kletzki, Columbia 33CX1250-1, is an excellent *Verklarte Nacht* by Schönberg. There is a fine singing tone from the strings and the recording is very good. This is the music of Tudor's dramatic ballet, *Pillar of Fire*, in which Nora Kaye's acting was so remarkable.

Two attractive little 7-inch EPs are, *Im Krapfenwald'l* and *Die Libelle* by Johann and Joseph Strauss respectively on Decca 45-71079. Both are well played by Clemens Krauss and the Vienna P.O. The theme of Joseph's waltz is much more insidious than one realises on first hearing it. The other disc is of Schnabel playing Schubert's lovely *Impromptus*, Op. 142, No. 2 and 4, on HMV.7ER5042. The first is part of Schubert's music that Lifar selected for his ballet, *Variations—A Romantic Divertissement*, and which he choreographed especially to show off the individual accomplishments of his talented ballerinas.

B.C.

tang of peasant vulgarity that makes Verdi so exciting a composer. But the cellos were inclined to whine instead of pleading their pathos.

TUNING FORK WANTED

The remainder of the evening was taken up with two works which Robert Irving conducted. *Les Sylphides*, having been presented some 190 times at the Royal Opera House, was recently refurbished by Grigoriev and Tchernicheva. The musical presentation certainly would not have taken its choreographer by the heart strings, as the original performance is reputed to have done. The Prelude in A major which opened the ballet was very slow and sagged, despite the clever orchestration by Gordon Jacob. Since the original version of this ballet was known as *Chopiniana* greater care must be paid to Chopin's music, and for the next performance I hope a tuning fork prevents so many of the orchestra sounding flat.

A WORD FOR IT

Had I been a Greek I should have had one word for *Tiresias* which ended the evening's programme. Constant Lambert's last work, it always seems to be adolescent and pretentious. It is the type of ballet, and the sort of music, that people disliking ballet would say is "typical long-haired art". Musically the performance was dull and at times the piano (Jean Gilbert) sounded like a public house masher in an Ealing film. All this may upset Mr. Pope but as far as I am critically concerned *Tiresias* is a futile series of scales with a percussive piano based on a too obvious Freudian theme.

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Dear Editor

FREDERICK W. CLARK WRITES FROM AMERICA

I received my first copy, today, of your magazine **BALLET TODAY**, and I feel it only your due to tell you how agreeably surprised I was to receive a specialized magazine of such marked interest in material, such an attractive format and so comprehensive a survey of the ballet world. I trust that you have an extensive list of subscribers from this country. There are so few publications today which cover the world of interest to balletomanes and the ever increasing fringe of those learning the pleasure of this art-field of entertainment that your magazine deserves a large reading public among those so interested.

As a matter of civic pride in the cultural life of San Francisco, which, in time, I hope will become the cultural centre of the United States, I should very much like to invite your interest in the work being done by the San Francisco Ballet, under the direction of Mr. Lew Christensen, with his brother William Christensen as ballet master. The organization is of sufficient im-

portance and ability to now have a reciprocal arrangement with the New York Ballet for the use of material and the exchange of artists, which should indicate something of its calibre. Periodically during the year performances are given at the Memorial Opera House which are professionally equal to those given by any of the touring companies. During the opera season here the ballet company furnishes the complete ensembles for any of the operas requiring ballet and usually during that season the ballet will divide the evening with a short opera by giving one of the more extensive divertissements of the repertoire. Regularly during the Stern Grove free Sunday summer concerts, given in the open by the S.F. Art Commission, the San Francisco Ballet corps appears several times. We San Franciscans are quite conscious of the unusual opportunity offered us by this organization for the complete enjoyment of the zenith of the fine arts—Ballet.

The music for these divertis-

sements is always provided by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, either in its entirety, as during the opera, or with an adequate ensemble. When Maitre Pierre Montieux directed it was a gala occasion both for the artists and the audience, since he is a born balletomane. Invariably the house is well sold out because ballet is very popular in San Francisco. Unfortunately recent performances of the touring companies have not had the houses they deserved because of ill-advised bookings. It has happened so frequently that several companies would book the city within a compass of one or two months and in consequence with so unvaried a type of entertainment, the audiences have gradually thinned out. It is during the interim of these engagements that we have come to depend so much upon the San Francisco Ballet for our pleasure.

I should have mentioned that my introduction to ballet was with the magnificent Diaghileff corps, during the Nijinski-Karsavina days in Paris and once, for fifteen nights in succession, at the departed but not forgotten Alhambra Theatre on Leicester Square. Since that time my enthusiasm and intelligent enjoyment have naturally grown until I can truthfully consider myself a qualified balletomane.

I trust you will kindly overlook

the enthusiasm with which I have written of our local organization . . . I am sure you will find it pardonable. And again may I compliment you on the excellence of your magazine—**BALLET TODAY**—.

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